



**FOCUS ON: Theology Among the People
(TAP) Graduates
– Where Are They Now?**

Charmaine Johnson

*Victory United Church of Christ
2009 TAP Graduate*

A native of Avondale, Louisiana, Charmaine Johnson was educated in Catholic Schools in New Orleans and holds a BS in Computer Science from Loyola University and an MBA from the University of Rochester (NY) W.E. Simon School of Business. Her corporate experience was with Eastman Kodak Company (Rochester, NY and Atlanta, GA) as well as Ernst & Young and the Department of Human Resources. Following her experiences in the TAP program, her life and career took a drastic turn.

Upon graduating from TAP in 2009, Charmaine entered Candler School of Theology of Emory University where she is currently a candidate for the Master of Divinity, to graduate in May 2012. Combining her skills and passions, her concentration is in Leadership in the Church and the Community, with Certificates in Religious Education and Black Church Studies. Charmaine is a Student-in-Care with the Georgia-South Carolina Association moving toward ordained ministry. Her mentors are her pastor, Dr. Kenneth L. Samuel, and her ordination advisor, Rev. Elizabeth Clement.



Charmaine is married to Kenneth Johnson, Sr., also a native of New Orleans, who is, in her words, “my best friend, my lover, my partner in ministry, my partner in life, partner in parenting....the list goes on!” Together, they are the parents of two boys - Kenneth Johnson, Jr - affectionately known as KJ - and Martin – who was named after two of their favorite theologians, Dr. Martin King, Jr. and Martin Luther. They currently live in Avondale, Georgia.

Charmaine is actively involved in many ministries. She is a member of the Candler Women's Organization and served as Coordinator for Worship Celebration during Candler Women's Week 2011. She has started planning components of Candler Women's Week 2012. (Hint: any UCC Candler female alum...you will be hearing something right after this summer.) She is also a



member of the Candler Black Student Caucus and is a writer for the African American Lectionary. Charmaine's reach goes far beyond the Avondales of Louisiana and Georgia. Recently, she participated in the TAP Global Theological Education Thailand immersion trip and is still engaged in theological reflections on this experience. She has also been elected by Candler and the leadership of the Middle East Travel Seminar to travel to Israel, Greece, Jordan, Syria and Sinai this summer.

As an active member of Victory Church, Charmaine has served in several lay leadership roles, including being Women's Fellowship Coordinator, a member of the Building Committee, and as former Coordinator for Children's Ministry, renamed Children's Village because she truly believes it takes a village to raise a child.

Asked how TAP has affected her life and ministry and how she is putting her TAP experiences and learning into practice, Charmaine responded in this way:

I consider myself to be a cheerleader and ambassador for TAP. TAP significantly enhanced my preparedness for seminary - during first year at Candler, references to verbatim, reflection papers, etc. did not need an explanation. I already knew what those were! Not to mention terms like embedded theology, deliberative theology, and all the rest. TAP further confirmed my hunger and thirst to engage in deeper biblical interpretation and theological reflection. Several texts from TAP have been used during my seminary experience. In fact, I received advice during the application process to refer to certain texts prior to writing admission essays... the texts were already on my shelf...from TAP classes! Being a part of one of the larger TAP graduation groups allowed me to further appreciate the diversity within life, including diversity of social location and diversity of thought. This ultimately allows me to further appreciate the diversity that

exists in the universal church. This appreciation of diversity has enhanced my passion for peace building, conflict transformation and inter and intra faith dialogue.

We wish Charmaine continued blessings on her journey. She is a wonderful ambassador and cheerleader for TAP!